

THIRTEEN SONNETS



GEORGIA

By

DANIEL WHITEHEAD HICKY

Illustrated by

CORNELIA CUNNINGHAM

*From the
Library of*



Stephens Mitchell

For Carrie Lou and Stephens,
with all sincere wishes of
their old friend

Wm. J. McKim

April 8, 1941.



THIRTEEN SONNETS GEORGIA



By
DANIEL WHITEHEAD HICKY
Illustrated by
CORNELIA CUNNINGHAM

COPYRIGHT, 1933, BY FRANK ROWSEY
COPYRIGHT, 1941, BY DANIEL WHITEHEAD HICKY

PUBLISHED BY FRANK ROWSEY
ATLANTA
APRIL, 1941

THIS COTTON PICKERS EDITION OF
THIRTEEN SONNETS OF GEORGIA
IS LIMITED TO SIX HUNDRED
COPIES.



S O N N E T S

I	Guale	10
II	The Margravate of Azilia	11
III	Tomochichi	12
IV	Mary Musgrove	13
V	The Slaves	16
VI	Broad River	17
VII	The Cotton Pickers—Dawn	20
VIII	The Cotton Pickers—Noon	21
IX	The Cotton Pickers—Sundown	22
X	The Cotton Pickers—Moonrise	23
XI	Fort Frederica	24
XII	Darien	25
XIII	Christ Churchyard: Frederica	27
	Historical Notes	29

I L L U S T R A T I O N S

Savannah	6
Guale	9
Broad River	15
The Cotton Pickers	19
Christ Church: Frederica	26





I



uale, The Golden Isles! How like a girl

You lay, your young breasts warm beneath the sun

Until, half-frightened, you saw a strange sail curl

On far horizons, heard echoes of a gun

From Spanish galleons that broke your silent sleep!

But fierce conquistadors were not to gain

A harvest! Only the Jesuits were to reap,

Armored in cowls, the musiced voice of Spain,

A brief, bright victory with their hot, spilled blood.

O Golden Isles beside a golden sea,

Lost in the peace of moss-hung oaks that brood,

Lost in the fragrance of flowers, how quietly

You sleep; how like a girl's heart sated of

Her lover, who slumbers at peace with life and love!

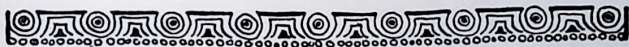


II



f that wild solitude of land that lay
Like some primeval giant long asleep,
He dreamed, Sir Robert, on a summer's day,

Beheld deep forests and the shining sweep
Of rivers, and he watched them slowly wind
Among the hills and valleys one by one,
Till suddenly, like a flame, upon his mind
Burned beauty of marshes mirroring the sun.
Thus were a dreamer's footsteps laid upon
The red dark soil that stretched beyond his eyes,
And with the coming of the Englishman
Unto the shores that rivaled Paradise—
Young Oglethorpe—pine forests thundered down
And from the seed of dreaming bloomed a town.

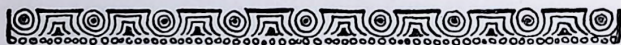


III



Tomochichi, in your hunting ground
Beyond the blue, bright boundary of our day,
In your far land where leaping fish abound

And butterflies light every forest way,
I wonder if you know the Great, Kind Spirit
Who led your doe-skin moccasins on these hills
Leads us today, and proudly we inherit
The legacy you willed us! Over the rills
And over the valleys that you used to know
Still blooms the moon-white rose, the tall pines sigh,
And in the purple quiet of after-glow
Gold stars like arrowheads pierce the darkening sky.
O Tomochichi the brave, the beloved one,
You have enriched the dust we tread upon!



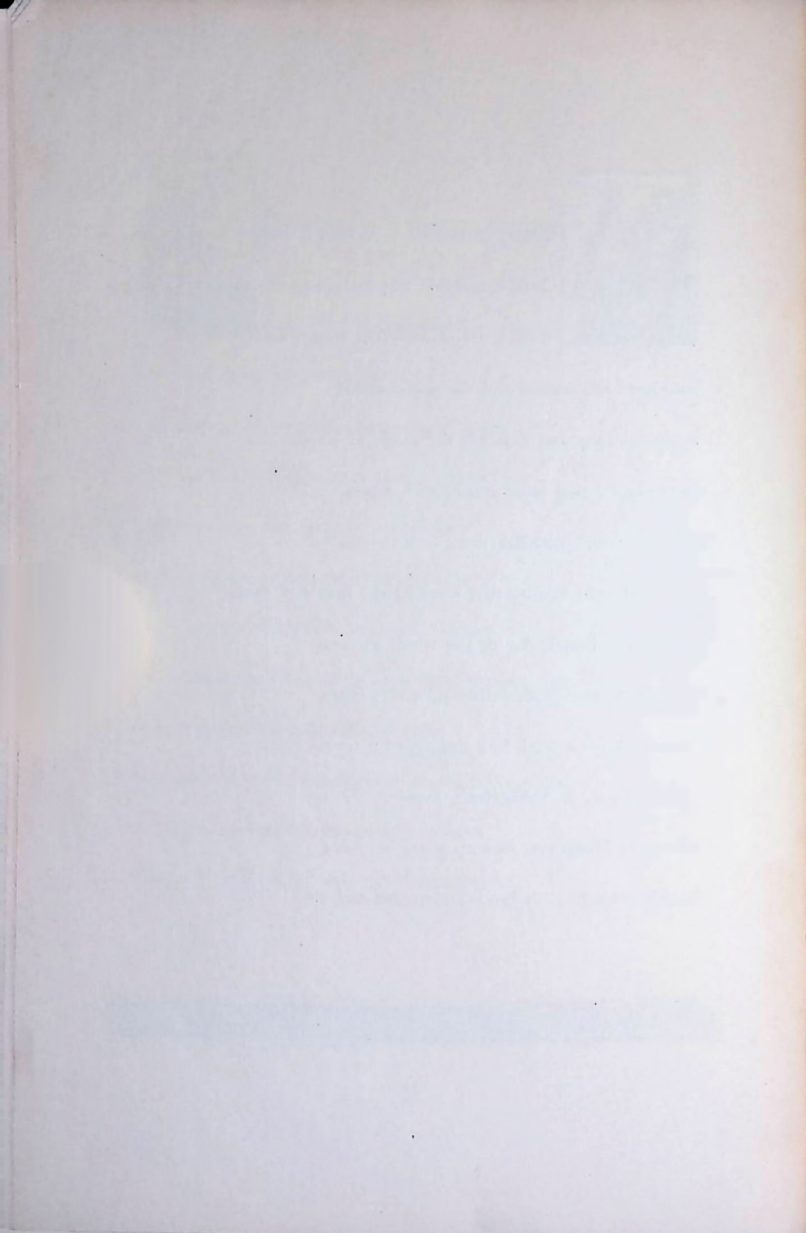
IV



h Mary Musgrove, fired with Indian eyes,
Half-breed save but in love and faithfulness,
Half-sister of Melatche whose warrior cries

Shattered the silence and the peacefulness
Of hours long lost beneath the sands of Time,
How shall I sing your praises with a pen,
Capture your eager heartbeat in a rhyme,
How tell your beauty that stormed the hearts of men?
"Upon the fourth day of the windy moon,
So long as suns shall shine and rivers flow—"
Thus ran your deed, like singing of a tune,
To Ossabaw, St. Catherine's, Sapelo.
Ah Mary Musgrove, may all peace be yours
Beside your English love! Your name endures!







V



What will you pay for slaves just off the boat?

This girl, fifteen, with strong and sinewy arm

(Glass beads still glittered about her ebony throat),

She'll quicken up the chores about your farm!

This boy of twelve; a well-developed chest,

Strong thighs, and muscular! What will you pay?"

And till the sun plunged down the waiting west

The auction thundered through their alien day.

After the gold moon like a lantern lifted

Its light above them as they soundly slept,

And, cool with honeysuckle, morning drifted

Across the fields where early rabbits leapt,

Shaking the rows where cotton blooms unfurled,

Their strange, dark eyes beheld a stranger world.



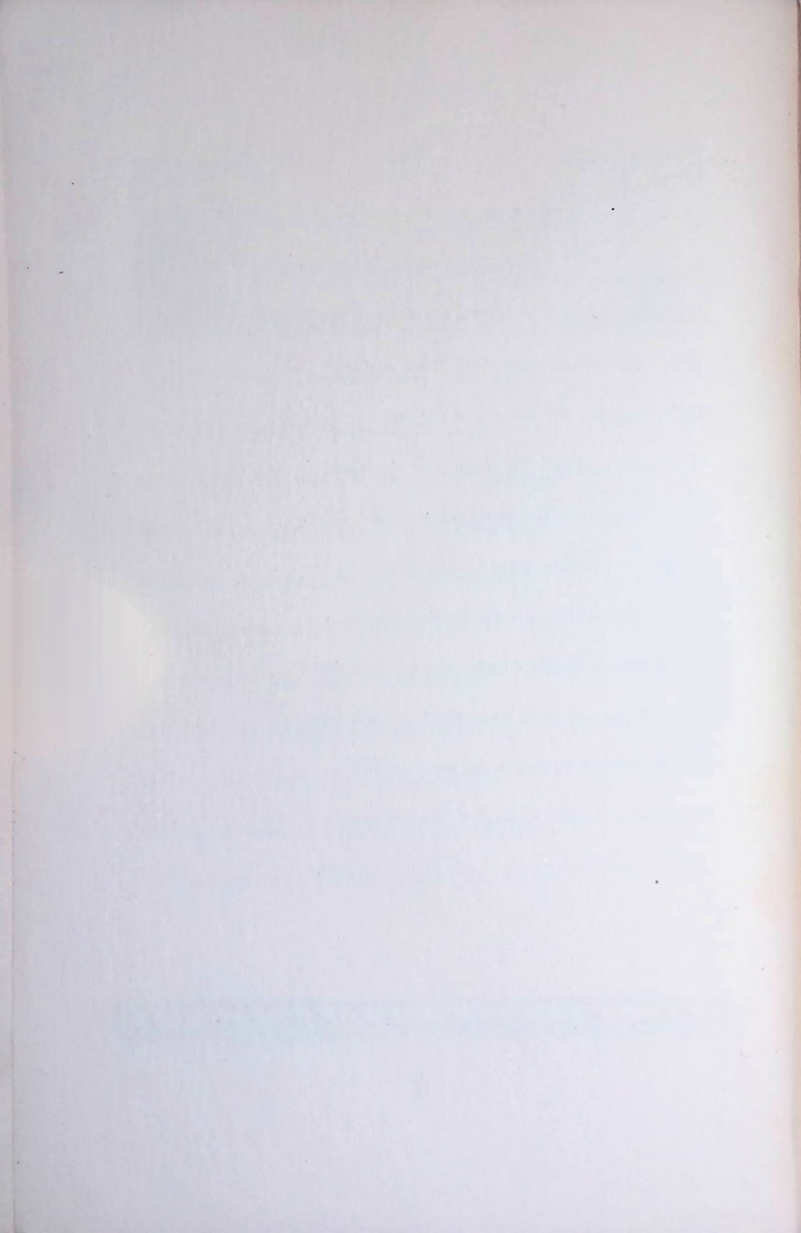
VI



Upon an amber day how sweet to hear,
 Cleaving the crystal highway of the river,
 The cotton boats, their bugles sharp and clear,

Music that set each listening heart aquiver!
 How beautiful the rhythm of the oars,
 Their rise and fall, the singing of the black
 Young darkies as the boats edged to the shores
 Laden with rolls of cotton and a stack
 Of brown tobaccos for the market-places,
 With red persimmons under the autumn sky!
 How bright the eyes, how eagerly lit the faces
 Of farmer lads to watch the boats go by!
 O vanished boats! O bugles that are gone!
 Your music steals upon our hearts like dawn.





CUNNINGHAM
1935-

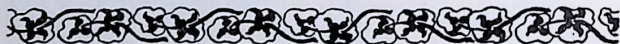


VII



hen the first sparrows shake magnolia boughs
 Whose cool, white chalices hold the color of dawn,
 While still the frail blue morning-glories drowse

Beneath the glittering dewfall, they are gone
 Into the broad fields, down the curving rows
 Flowing like silent music beneath the sun,
 And, with a measured tune that no one knows
 Save those who gather cotton, they are one
 In rhythm and in stark simplicity—
 The bonneted heads of girls scarce in their 'teens,
 The tall bronze men, their women who shall be
 Down with another child ere autumn wanes,
 The young boys picking, rising, bending down,
 Pausing to watch the first train into town.



VIII



he sun, a slow flame lapping against the sky,
Falls heavy on the furrows and the heat
Withers the leaves toward noon. With a slow sigh

The pickers drop the bags against their feet

And seek the house again, and food, and shade.

A watermelon bleeds its heart away

Upon a rough-hewn table overlaid

With oilcloth from the village. Palm fans sway

Against the torrid air. A battered cup

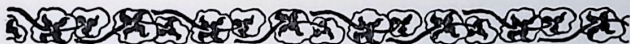
Floats in a bucket of water from the well—

A shining offering earth lifted up,

Swinging in music like a slow-rung bell.

Cape jasmines droop, grow motionless, until

Time, even, for a breathless moment, stands still.



IX



he day is over as surely as the last
Heart-beat that flutters in the breast and dies.
The sweating horses paw the pasture. Fast

The sun's red embers fail. A lone bird cries.

The smell of corn-pone permeates the hour

And pungent coffee boiling in a pot

Sweetens the air like a newly opened flower;

The day is over, the ripening fields forgot.

A banjo strikes a tune. A lamp, dim-lit,

Throws golden petals of light outside the door

And round the cleanswept steps the toilers sit,

Breathing the sunset. Sprawling upon the floor

A young girl ponders on a world that gave

Her feet a path of cotton to the grave.

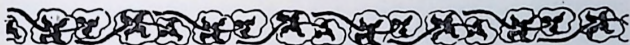


X



he swamp-pond ripples with the sun's last light;
Silence as deep as darkness blows it out
And the low country is suddenly lost in night.

Here was a cabin; only a musical shout
By husky voices tells the place it stood;
Here was a roadway running by a fence
Broken with honeysuckle; here, a wood
Stillter than any dead tongue's eloquence.
Now all are gone, lost under the wave of dark
That swept the swamplands and the ponds away.
Slowly, a single firefly's lonely spark
Riding the dark tide like a bead of spray
Flashes its yellow signal and not in vain:
The moon comes up. The swamps drift back again.

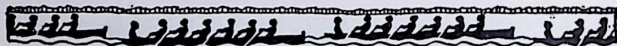


XI



It is enough that you should leave to us
This heritage of shattered tabby-stone
Here at the marshes' edges, tremulous

With sand grass and the herons' wing. Alone,
You rise where rhythmmed waters from the sea
Whisper against your grey and shell-torn walls,
Telling of strange new ships that came to be,
Of dreams fulfilled. Here, where the sunlight falls
Upon you, hidden by honeysuckle flowers,
A vine of English ivy that knows no death,
We come, with but these empty words of ours
Lost on the air like oleanders' breath,
To speak our gratitude with bended head,
To say the words that never can be said.



XII



till does the sharp, sweet smell of Georgia pine

Drift over the river idling to the sea,

But tangled with Queen Anne's lace and trumpet-vine

The river-front is quiet with memory.

Once deep-hulled vessels leaned against the pier,

And sweating darkies with music on their lips

Loaded the cargoes out, the sunlit air

Glamorous with the smell and beauty of ships.

Here went proud clippers to the far world lying

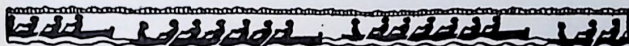
Beneath a red moon bleeding against the dark,

Freighters and schooners followed by the flying

Of shining gulls. Now, fireflies, spark on spark,

Light up the harbor where only silence stirs,

And Darien weeps for glory that was hers.





XIII



eneath this muted conference of oak
 Spreading an emerald heaven overhead,
 With grey moss hanging like a phantom smoke,

Time counts the timeless hours of the dead.

No spoken word awakes the quiet here,

No footfall, save the darkness and the dawn,

No stir save jasmine breathing on the air,

Dropping their dying petals on each stone.

Deep in our hearts they sleep, these pioneers,

The young, the brave, the beautiful, the old,

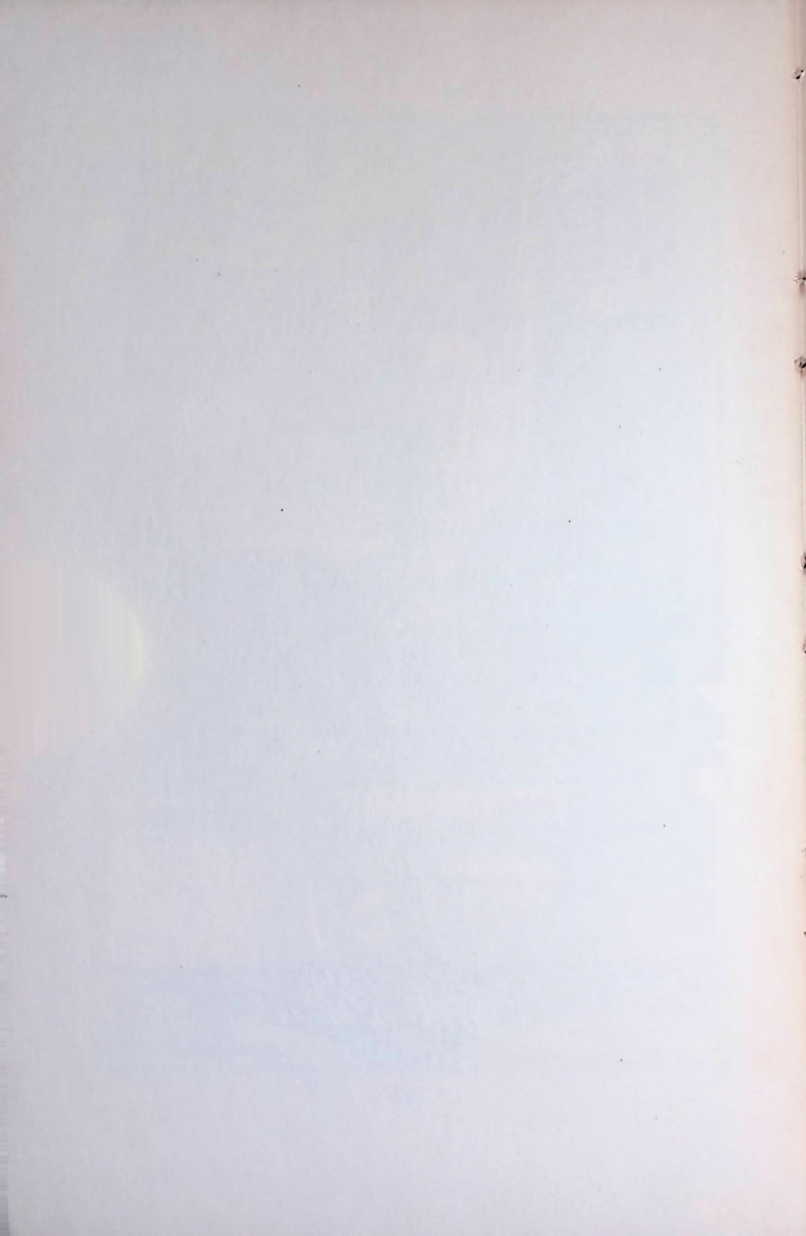
Who made an alien shore so wholly theirs!

Down the slow centuries as the years are told

By Time's cold fingers at his crumbling door

They are at peace with earth. They ask no more.





HISTORICAL NOTES

GAULE

The sea islands which stretch along the Georgia coast were settled by the Spanish as early as 1568. St. Catherine's Island was called Guale after an old Indian of that name who entertained Menendez upon his visit to the island a year after the founding of St. Augustine. Later, because of its importance as ecclesiastical headquarters, the whole district was given the name.

On the islands the Jesuits established missions and built chapels which subsequently were destroyed in a series of Indian uprisings. Restored, they flourished until 1685 when the Carolina colonists, aided by the Creeks and Yemasees, sacked the islands and either slew or carried into captivity the entire population.

Later they were used as a refuge by Edward Teach, the notorious Blackbeard. At the time of the English settlement of Savannah they were uninhabited, every trace of the Spanish civilization had disappeared and because of their abundance of game, they were known among the Creeks as the Hunting Islands.

THE MARGRAVATE OF AZILIA

In June, 1717, sixteen years before the settlement of Savannah, Sir Robert Montgomery secured from the Palatine and Lords Proprietors of the Province of Carolina a grant and release of all lands lying between the rivers Altamaha and Savannah, with permission also to make settlements on the south side of the former river. This territory was to be erected into a distinct province, in no manner subject to the laws of South Carolina and was to be called the Margravate of Azilia.

Sir Robert, probably to encourage immigration, proclaimed this new territory south of Carolina "the most amiable country of the universe" and declared that "nature has not blessed the world with any tract which can be preferable to it; that Paradise with all her virgin beauties may be modestly supposed at most but equal to its native excellencies. It lies," he continued, "in the same latitude with Palestine herself, that promised Canaan which was pointed out by God's own choice to bless the labors of a favorite people."

The project, however, failed; for the covenant stipulated that settlement must be made within three years. When this time had passed and no colonists had been recruited, the grant was voided.

TOMOCHICHI

Tomochichi, a Creek Indian, but Mico or chief of a Yamacraw village near the present site of Savannah, was more than ninety years old when Oglethorpe landed. An amiable, kindly, generous man, he proved to be the firmest friend of the English, their adviser, protector, guide, and constant companion of the General.

In 1734 with his wife and Toonahowi, his nephew and adopted son, he visited England where he was received at Court and painted by Verelst. Greatly impressed and with his friendship for the English strengthened, he returned to Georgia and dedicated himself to the welfare of the colonists.

Freely he gave away his lands, abandoned his tribal goods; but warrior to the end, he repulsed with devastating logic any assault upon his spiritual wealth. When urged by the Rev. John Wesley to become a convert, the old man cried: "Why these are Christians at Savannah! Those are Christians at Frederica! Christians drunk! Christians beat men! Christians tell lies! Me no Christian!"

Tomochichi, co-founder of the State of Georgia, passed away on October 5, 1739, and in accordance with his last wish, was buried among the English in Savannah.

MARY MUSGROVE

Mary Musgrove, whose Indian name was Coosaponakesee, was a half breed who acted as Oglethorpe's interpreter. She became the wife of Thomas Bosomworth, an unscrupulous person, who had come from England as a chaplain in Oglethorpe's regiment. Through her Bosomworth had hoped to obtain fabulous possessions and his influence was none too good on the character of his wife.

When Melatche, a Creek chieftain whom Mary claimed as a half brother, visited Frederica in 1747, Bosomworth by various manœuverings among the sixteen Micos or chieftains who accompanied him, had Melatche crowned King of the Creeks. Immediately he induced the newly made monarch to bestow upon Mary the Hunting Islands—Ossabaw, St. Catherine's and Sapelo.

When news of this transaction reached the Colonial authorities, they notified the Bosomworths that they would not allow the cessation of such a huge portion of the province. The Bosomworths, likewise indignant, proceeded to get drunk and, gathering about them a group of Indian warriors, set out for Savannah determined to secure justice, by force of arms if necessary. There they were captured and imprisoned and forced to take their grievance into court.

After years of litigation the London Council finally ordered Ossabaw and Sapelo sold to the highest bidder but confirmed the Bosomworth's title to St. Catherine's. On this island the couple spent the remainder of their lives and there they were buried.

BROAD RIVER

Following the close of the Revolution the scene of Georgia's development shifted to the Broad River country of upper Georgia where, with the invention of the cotton gin, a great wealth bloomed. Log houses gave way to ante-bellum mansions and the prosperous planters imported grandfather clocks and heavy silver from Liverpool and London.

The staple grown in this section was shipped in cotton boats down the river to Augusta and from there to Savannah, where it was loaded for export.

The Broad River cotton boats were about seventy feet long and five feet wide. The bales were round and each boat carried about sixty. The planters, scattered along the river and remote from market, availed themselves of these boats to perform various commissions and to notify the various farms of their approach, each boat carried a bugle.

According to the unpublished memoirs of the late Judge Junius Hillyer, these bugles were about five and one-half feet long, were made of smoothly dressed, highly polished staves and had mouth pieces of horn. They gave forth a "clear sweet sound, like the notes of a bird, but with a volume that could be heard for miles on the river. Generally each boat carried a crew of five and the men and the oars moved in harmony and in time with the bugle's soft swelling tones."

DARIEN

Darien was settled in 1735 by a colony of Scots mostly from Inverness and its vicinity. Its original name was New Inverness.

In 1736 the citizens of Savannah appealed to Oglethorpe for permission to employ slaves. In 1739 the citizens of Darien addressed a strong petition to the General requesting him to ignore the petition of the Savannahians and to leave intact the clause in the Georgia charter forbidding forever the introduction of African slavery. This was the first protest in all history against the employment of slaves, but ten years later the system was introduced.

Located on the north bank of the Altamaha River, Darien is beautifully shaded with live oaks and prior to the War Between the States was a thriving, prosperous commercial town, the center of the Sea Island civilization.

Immense quantities of timber and naval stores from the pine lands of the interior were shipped from Darien and it became for a time one of the busiest of American ports.

FRANK ROWSEY.





